

## 2023 COURSE SCHEDULE for Catechism, Part I

<b>DATE</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>
1. Saturday, Oct. 14 a. Sunday, Oct. 15	<b>The True God</b> <b>On St. Seraphim</b>
2. Saturday, Oct. 21 a. Sunday, Oct. 22	<b>The Human Being</b> <b>Setting up a prayer corner</b>
3. Sunday, Oct. 28 a. Sunday, Oct. 29	<b>On Sin</b> <b>Icons: Prayer and Theology</b>
4. Saturday, Nov. 4 a. Sunday, Nov. 5	<b>Jesus Christ the Son of God</b> <b>Participation in the Liturgy</b>
5. Saturday, Nov. 11 a. Sunday, Nov. 12	<b>Jesus Christ the Savior</b> <b>On Great Vespers</b>
6. Saturday, Nov. 18 a. Sunday, Nov. 19	<b>Repentance and Faith</b> <b>On Proportional Giving</b>
7. Saturday, Dec. 2 a. Sunday, Dec 3	<b>The Holy Spirit</b> <b>Feast Days of the Church</b>
8. Saturday, Dec. 9 a. Sunday, Dec. 10	<b>The Church</b> <b>Icons: Prayer and Theology. Pt. 2</b>
9. Saturday, Dec. 16 a. Sunday, Dec. 17	<b>The Virgin Mary</b> <b>Monasticism</b>
A.	Classes meet Saturday afternoons from 3:30 until Vespers. Attendance at the Saturday classes is required for Baptism (if absent, listen to a recording of the class)
B.	During Liturgy on Sunday, Catechumens are dismissed to attend a class in the library
C.	<b>Reading during the first period of catechesis:</b> <i>Know the Faith</i> —Fr. Michael Shanbour; <i>Come, Let us Worship</i> —Fr. Patrick O’Grady; <i>Gospel of St. Matthew</i>

## **COURSE SCHEDULE for Catechism, Part 2**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>
10. Saturday, Feb. 24 a. Sunday, Feb. 25	<b>The Mystery of Holy Baptism</b> <b>Parish History</b>
11. Saturday, March 2 a. Sunday, March 3	<b>The Mystery of Chrismation</b> <b>First Week of Great Lent</b>
12. Saturday, March 16 a. Sunday, March 17	<b>The Holy Eucharist</b> <b>Preparing for Communion</b>
13. Saturday, March 23 a. Sunday, March 24	<b>The Mystery of Confession</b> <b>Preparing for Confession</b>
14. Saturday, March 30 a. Sunday, March 31	<b>The Mystery of the Priesthood</b> <b>Baptismal Sermon of St. John</b>
15. Saturday, April 6 a. Sunday, April 7	<b>The Mystery of Marriage</b> <b>Baptismal Sermon of St. John</b>
16. Saturday, April 13 a. Sunday, April 14	<b>The Mystery of Holy Unction</b> <b>Holy Week</b>
17. Saturday, April 20 a. Sunday, April 21	<b>Death and the Funeral</b> <b>On the Paschal celebration</b>
18. Fri., April 26, 6 PM a. Sat. April 27, 9 AM	<b>Matins and Baptismal run-thru</b> <i>Baptisms/Chrismations</i> <i>Divine Liturgy, Holy Communion</i>

### **Texts To Read (required):**

*The Beginnings of a Life of Prayer*, Father Irenei (Steenburg)  
*Great Lent*, Father Alexander Schmemmann  
*Gospel of St. Mark*

## ***DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES***

1. Catechumens are to participate in all the classes and Saturday evening Vespers. **If you cannot come to a class, please get the recording for that class. It is our policy to receive into the Church only those who have completed the course in its entirety.**
2. During Great Lent, catechumens are expected to attend the 6 PM Wednesday evening Liturgy of the Presanctified.
3. Catechumens tend the candle sand and candle stubs; at the beginning and end of each service, they should be sure that the candle areas are neat and tidy, and that the sand is clean and tidy. Catechumens manage the oil lamps in the Nave and Narthex.
4. Catechumens, if they have not already, meet with the priest to establish a rule of prayer, fasting, and the doing of acts of mercy.
5. Catechumens are to be listeners and not talkers. They should listen to instruction; they should ask their teachers (priest, deacon, lay catechists, sponsor) questions, but not opine with others or get into theological dialogues or disputes with others.
6. Catechumens may invite others to church with “Come and see,” but should not instruct heterodox or non-Christians in dogmatic or spiritual matters.
7. Catechumens may not post theological opinions or enter into theological discussions or debates on social media, discussion groups, chat-sites, etc.
8. Catechumens may and ought to bear witness to “all the good that God is doing” in their lives, and when asked “tell me about the differences...” they should say: “others are more qualified for that. Come and see!” Or “Come and ask the priest.”
9. Catechumens should develop a ministry of love with the older members of the congregation. They should make a regular point of greeting the elders/elderly, and conversing with them.
10. When a person is serious and wishes finally to be received into the Church, he or she commits to tithing, if he or she has not already: offering his/her first and best 10% to God, for “*where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*”

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## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Once a person becomes a Catechumen, he or she can typically expect to spend nine to twelve months preparing to be received. Baptisms/Chrismations may also take place any other time of the year; usually they will occur on the following days: Lazarus Saturday, Holy Saturday, Theophany, Pentecost.

Prior to Baptism, a Catechumen will prepare a “Lifetime Confession of Sins” and make the confession in the months, weeks and days prior to joining the Church. I recommend the book *The Path to Confession, a book for family reading presented to children* and **Return** as the best tools for preparing for the Holy Mystery of Confession.

Following Baptism, the newly-illuminated will make a confession once a week for a period of a month and thereafter once per month.

# INVOLVEMENT IN THE CHURCH LIFE

## ***1. WORSHIP***

The best “course of studies” for anyone in the Church begins and continues with the corporate prayer of the Church. **The following Services may be considered “obligatory” for the Orthodox Christian and the Catechumen preparing to be Orthodox:**

- the “base-line” minimum service of **Saturday evening Vespers** (the hymns focus on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and serve as a preparation for Communion)
- **Sunday morning Divine Liturgies**. Sunday is the Lord’s Day, and we are to keep it holy.
- The Orthodox Christian strives to sanctify time and the calendar by celebrating the glorious **Festal Vigils and Liturgies** of the Church year—consult the monthly calendar.

The worship of the Holy Trinity—the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit—is the greatest gift of God to mankind, and we learn how to worship in the Liturgical practice of the Church.

Corporate prayer is not complete without ***personal & and daily prayer***. We use the prayers in the Orthodox Prayer Book, the Jesus Prayer and our own personal prayers.

Part of the life of an Orthodox Christian, Catechumen or already received, are four further essential components: almsgiving, stewardship, fasting and forgiveness.

## ***2. ALMSGIVING***

***Works of mercy*** is the giving of time, money or help—often in secret—to the poor, needy, hungry, destitute, or lonely. We are to be judged in this matter (See Matthew Chapt 25).

## ***3. STEWARDSHIP and PARISH SERVICE***

***Stewardship*** is the giving of thanks to God, as directed by the Old Testament and Lord Jesus Christ and St Paul in the New Testament, by making a regular financial offering what God has prospered you. Scriptural passages in support of stewardship are too many to mention here. We are to give proportionally from what we earn.

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#### **4. FASTING**

The Orthodox Christian fasts from meat and dairy products (animal products) on Wednesday and Friday. This is a “midnight to midnight” fast.

One also fasts prior to the Sunday Divine Liturgy, or the Divine Liturgy on any day, from all liquids, foods, cigarettes, etc. Medication and food with medication is of course allowed as needed. Speak to the priest in these situations.

#### **5. FORGIVENESS & LOVE**

Essential to the life of a parish, with all of the interaction and common work, is the active pursuit of loving and forgiving others. “Forgive us our debts (or trespasses) as we forgive our debtors.” What more needs to be said?

These things listed above are just a small part of the change (the Greek word is *metania*) in the way of living and thinking that one attempts when becomes an Orthodox Christian. The Beatitudes (*Sermon on the Mount, St Matthew*) are guides to this change.